

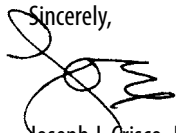
Dear Neighbor,

As we begin the New Year, I want to thank you for taking the time to respond to my legislative survey. Your views on transportation, energy costs and the budget surplus are important and will help to determine our legislative priorities for the 2006 Session, which will begin on February 8th.

I also want to bring you up to date on the **Bio-Medical Research Trust Fund**, which was created through legislation I introduced. Now in its second year, this program provides funding for research into heart disease, cancer and other smoking related illnesses. Recently, \$1.5 million was released, allowing the Department of Public Health to request a new round of research proposals from Connecticut hospitals and medical schools. That an answer to the hopes of so many patients may be found in the studies funded by this Trust Fund is an exciting possibility.

Finally, I want to report on legislation passed during the Special Session. You will find the information summarized in this newsletter, and I hope that you will take a moment to read it through.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.



STATE SENATOR

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Senator Joe Crisco

2005 SPECIAL SESSIONS

Although the 2005 Legislative Session ended in June, we met in special sessions in order to target critical issues affecting healthcare coverage, energy, public safety and campaign finance reform. I am proud to report that we passed legislation that:

▪ **Protects HUSKY for Children**

It was imperative that we take action once the Department of Social Services announced that 2,200 children would lose coverage from the HUSKY health insurance program because the families could not afford the increase in premiums. The bill we passed restored funding to the state budget thereby preventing higher premiums from taking effect.

▪ **Provides Energy Assistance**

With record energy prices expected this winter, we approved a bill designed to help low-and moderate-income families cope with rising costs for energy. The energy assistance bill: 1) increases benefits for eligible households; 2) provides new funding under the Contingency Heating Assistance Program; and 3) applies a sales tax exemption from November 25, 2005-April 1, 2006 on certain weatherization products, including furnaces. For more information, contact the Department of Social Services at 1-800-842-1132.

▪ **Makes sure commercial trucking companies have insurance**

We now require trucking firms to notify the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) periodically as to whether their insurance is in force. This legislation was prompted by a tragic accident in which a dump truck went out of control and crashed into a bus and several cars. The tragedy was compounded further by the lack of liability and collision insurance coverage on the part of the trucking firm. Consequently, victims and their families may be left without adequate and just compensation.

▪ **Reforms the Campaign Finance System**

I believe that our comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation will serve as a national model for keeping special interest money out of campaigns. The bill sets up a voluntary system for full public financing of all statewide and legislative offices after December 31, 2006. It creates spending limits and bans contributions from lobbyists and contractors. I hope that these measures will restore trust in the political process and state government, and encourage more residents to become involved.

▪ **Protects ConnPACE Coverage**

Many seniors who take advantage of Connecticut's excellent prescription drug program and certain Medicaid recipients need not be concerned about coverage gaps once Medicare Part D takes effect. The bill we passed ensures continuation of coverage.



RIGHT: While hosting my 2005 Senior Fair, I commended the "grandmothers" of the Connecticut Afghan Project who knit beautiful afghans, which are then donated to children in Department of Children and Families foster care.

BUDGET: GOOD NEWS for WOODBRIDGE

Woodbridge will receive an increase in state aid to help stabilize property taxes.

- \$46,081 total increase over previous year
- \$522,005 total education funding
- \$109,952 total Town Aid Road (TAR)
- \$731,222 total statutory formula grants

SPECIAL WOODBRIDGE FUNDING

\$375,000 for Open Space

I'm very pleased that Woodbridge has been awarded an open space grant of \$375,000 by the Department of Environmental Protection. The grant will be used to acquire 66.5 acres as part of phase II of the Racebrook Tract.

\$500,000 West Rock Ridge State Park

The 2005 bond package approved by the General Assembly includes \$500,000 in funding for the acquisition of property in the area of West Rock Ridge State Park. I worked hard for this funding because residents have expressed concern in recent years about the future of the park. I believe it is important to find ways to expand the park.

\$25,000 grant for Town Hall Improvements

A \$25,000 grant I worked hard to secure will be used to make improvements at the Woodbridge Town Hall.

\$300,000 Small Cities Community Development Grant

To be used for essential housing improvements and upgrades.